



## **GREECE** by Vasiliki Apostolopoulou

Apostolopoulou, V. (2012). Greece. In C. L. Glenn & J. De Groof (Eds.), *Balancing freedom, autonomy and accountability in education: Volume 2* (229-244). Tilburg, NL: Wolf Legal Publishers.

### *Overview*

Greece, along with Italy, forms an exception to the European norm of extensive educational freedom both in organizing nonpublic school in a manner that is distinctively different from the public schools, and in receiving public subsidies that allow equal access to nonpublic schools regardless of family income.

In comparison to other European Member States, there are educational particularities due to geographical and historical factors. For example, the level of educational attainment is considerably lower than the EU average.<sup>1</sup>

### *The structure of schooling*

The Greek educational system remains highly centralized, despite some recent gestures toward decision-making.<sup>2</sup> Based on the laws passed by the Parliament for all levels of education, the state seeks to democratize education by decentralization, by ensuring the participation of those directly involved in the educational process,

upgrading the quality of education and applying meritocracy in the selection of administrative staff for education.

The general responsibility for education lies with the Ministry of Education Lifelong Learning and Religious Affairs. The Minister of Education Lifelong Learning and Religious Affairs is responsible for the administration of all private and public schools in Greece, which takes place through the Ministry central and regional services and through Councils of a consultative and scientific nature that have been created.<sup>3</sup>

In addition, there are Directorates of Primary and Secondary Education in every prefecture that undertake the administration and oversee the operation of pre-primary school, primary and secondary education. The schools in each prefecture, both public and private, and at all levels, are administered by the Head of the Directorate of Education. At the prefectural level, there are Regional Service Councils for Primary and Secondary Education, which are created by the Prefect and are responsible for matters related to the service status of teachers. A School Council operates in every school and its task is to support the operation of the school. School Committees are responsible for managing the budgets which are made available for running costs.

In the 2007 school year attendance at the pre-primary school became compulsory at the age of five, so the number of years of compulsory education is ten.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, compulsory education comprises, one year of Pre-primary School, six years of primary education for pupils aged between 6 -12 and three years of lower secondary education for 12-15 years old pupils. After completing seven years of primary education, pupils can register in lower secondary school (*gymnasio*), where they are obliged to attend school for another three years.

The curricula, that includes subject hours and timetables, of primary to secondary education are elaborated by the Ministry of Education, Lifelong Learning and Religious Affairs. Abiding by the curricula is mandatory for pupils and teachers and it is prohibited to compress the years of education. For instance, there are no placement tests designed to determine students' proficiency level and therefore placement or exemption for each subject area, as in other countries. Thus, according to the legislative framework primary and lower secondary education are compulsory from the age of five to the age of fifteen. There is no freedom or flexibility in the duration of the students' education and any person who has custody of a minor and fails to register him or her in school and ensure his or her schooling is subject to a penalty in accordance with the Penal Code.<sup>5</sup>

In the 2010-2011 school year there were 14,379 public schools and 1,043 private schools for a total of 15,422 school.<sup>6</sup> The school population during the school year

2010- 2011, compared with 2009- 2010 increased by 1.2 percent in primary schools and declined by 0.5 percent in secondary schools. While the overall pupil population has increased, however, it has been declining in public schools and increasing in private schools. In 2008-2009 93 percent of pupils attended public- sector schools and 7 percent private schools. The main reason for the increase in private schools appears to be the better disciplinary climate in contrast to the public schools.<sup>7</sup> As a consequence, private schools have a high success rate of students' admission in foreign universities. For example, in HAEF School (Hellenic American Educational Foundation) in 2011, 66.5 percent of students were admitted to foreign universities ([www.haef.gr](http://www.haef.gr)). In addition, students from the private schools have a high success rate in Greek universities. For example, graduates of the HAEF School in 2011 had an 85.4 percent rate of success and those of the Arsakeia Schools had 94.08 percent rate of success.<sup>8</sup>

Public education is funded by the state through the regular budget and the public investments budget, and to a lesser degree by non-state sources. The regular budget covers teachers' salaries, operational costs of school units, books, scholarships and purchase of teaching equipment. Private schools are not grant aided, they are fully self-financed.<sup>9</sup>

According to law 4024 (2011), teachers of public schools have equal rights with teachers in the private sector but in practice they do not. Typical salaries in public and private schools have equalized but the privileges of public school teachers for professional development are more. For example, teachers in the private sector cannot be School Advisers and this has nothing to do with qualifications and experience which most often happens to be more in private school than in a public school. In private schools the hours of teachers are adjusted and there is flexibility in the curriculum leading to good quality of education. The fact that there is tenure of public employees<sup>10</sup> has lowered the quality of education in the public sector. The public sector is not as flexible as the private sector, which exhibits creates greater flexibility and applies creative and innovative ideas.

Although there have been many attempts to decentralize the education system with the new educational system, providing freedom to teachers with respect to the curriculum, it is difficult for teachers to leave their comfort zone. For many years the educational system was very rigid and the curriculum very rigorous, so the teachers need time to change their habits. A provision<sup>11</sup> providing some flexibility in implementing the prescribed curriculum gives teachers the opportunity to choose their own material and resources in order to meet the curriculum goals, but use of this is limited by the prevailing mindset and culture in schools.

It has been suggested that Greek educational system and the role of independent schools within it reflect the inherent antinomies of Greek society. From classical times Greeks

have been remarkable for two fascinatingly paradoxical characteristics, an intense, excitable and ruthless individualism and a deep sense of loyalty to party, region and the country which is the birthplace of western culture. Decentralization of power is rare and education, like other aspects of life, is bureaucratically controlled from the center and examination-ridden and in comparison to other [EU] countries, has adapted slowly to modern trends. So individual and commercially competitive are the schools that are virtually unable to come together for mutual protection and the furtherance of their educational ideals. They are hard set to lighten the constraints of a bureaucratic and highly centralized system of financial and educational controls and are in fact virtually ham-strung by ministerially imposed curricula, text books and examinations, so that even the small number of non- profit-making institutions like Athens College, despite better resources and better-qualified staffs, they are unable to offer the variety of choice and method which in different degrees is normal elsewhere. Political pressures share much of the blame for this, alongside the national tradition of unquestioned central control.

## *The legal framework*

Section one of article 16 of the Constitution adopted in 1975, after the fall of the last authoritarian government, provides that art and science, research and teaching shall be free and the State is obliged for their improvement and promotion.

Section two of Article 16 of the Constitution states that education constitutes the main mission for the State and shall aim at the physical, intellectual and moral training of Greeks, as well as the development of their national and religious consciousness and their formation as free and responsible citizens.

Section four of the same article, provides that all Greeks are entitled to free education at all levels of State educational institutions.

Finally, section eight of article 16 has the only references to nonpublic educational institutions, and these are limiting rather than supportive of educational freedom. This section states that terms and conditions for granting a license for the establishment and operation of non- state schools, the supervision of such and the professional status of teaching personnel there in shall be defined by law.

Law No. 1566 of 30 September 1985 regulates primary and secondary education. This law establishes a flexible education system and regulates new curricula and improvements in teaching methods and educational resources. It gives a decisive impetus to decentralization and brings about the democratization of education.

The Ministry of Education and Religion has been renamed the Ministry of Education, Lifelong Learning and Religious Affairs thus incorporating into its competence, apart from issues of education, issues pertaining to research, Lifelong Learning, vocational training and their link into the labour market.<sup>12</sup>

Since 1997, law 2525, article three established the all-day pre-primary school and all-day primary school, with an extended basic curriculum complemented with alternative teaching approaches and content. These include empirical methods, modern subjects and skills such as information and communication technologies (ICT), and additional hours for foreign language teaching. The all-day primary school is a response to the changing characteristics and needs of the modern family, where often both parents work, as well as to contemporary pedagogical methods that have a pupil focus and active education.

In 2010, the curriculum and guidelines of primary schools was reviewed and updated and from the school year 2010-2011, 800 schools worked to pilot this new reformed curriculum (EAEP).<sup>13</sup> The new curriculum has a reduction of course matter, extends the mandatory hours, focuses on the Greek language and mathematics, gives priority to ICT, targets foreign languages (English, French, German), aesthetic education (music, art, theater) and physical education, finally increases the hours of culture especially literature, and plans for each school at least five educational visits in areas of social concern.

For the 2011-2012 school year the number of all-day schools has been increased. In particular, there are 4,329 all-day primary schools out of a total of 5,227 schools in the country, and 3,170 out of 6,217 pre-primary schools are all-day.<sup>14</sup>

The main benefit of the all-day school is the flexible curriculum, since it is the teacher who will have an influence and ownership of the content, material and teaching method. In addition, it is coherent from kindergarten to high school to ensure the continuity and connection of knowledge between courses and classes. Moreover, it is a tool of communication and guidance of the educational process that is accessible to teachers and understood by parents. Finally, the curriculum is interdisciplinary in what it promotes and cultivates across the core competencies and skill-development. The key emphasis is on a cross-curricular approach to knowledge. Within this framework, the flexible zone of interdisciplinary and creative activities encourages pupils' experiential education through activities and projects. Finally, the interdisciplinary approach allows the student to establish a single body of knowledge and skills that will enable him to develop a personal opinion on issues related to each other with everyday issues and form his own worldview.<sup>15</sup>

Reinstated Standards and Experimental Schools (Peiramatika Scholeia) aim at the practical and pedagogic training of educational staff in experimental application of programs and teaching methods as well as the experimental use of textbooks, audiovisuals and other means of educational technology.<sup>16</sup>

According to law 2817/2000 Regional Centres of Diagnosis, Evaluation and Support (KDAY) which provide the corresponding services to pupils, support and guidance to teachers were established. Furthermore, Special Education School Units (SMEA) were set up and special education teachers provide support to students with special educational needs attending regular school classes in mainstream schools. Finally, the law 3699/2008 stated that Special Education is an integral part of compulsory and free public education and promoted meaningful and functional support for inclusive education.

### *Freedom to establish non-state schools*

Lower secondary (*Gymnasio*) and upper secondary schools (*Lykeio*) can be founded by foreigners (individuals or legal entities) or by the competent state authority of a foreign state based on bilateral education agreements. There are foreign private schools providing education mainly to foreign nationals residing in Greece that operate on the basis of bilateral cultural agreements between Greece and the specific contracting states and pursuant to the provisions of the law on foreign schools. These are exclusively private institutions established and operated under Law 3696/2008. Establishment of private special education schools is prohibited (N.2817/2000). Only foundations or nonprofit organizations may establish special education schools and these are supervised by the Ministry of Education, Lifelong Learning and Religious Affairs.

Private schools which belong to legal entities of a non-profit nature are recognized as equivalent to state schools. Private schools must meet the minimal conditions defined by law #682 of 1977. Private pre-primary and primary schools follow the organization and curriculum in effect in the state schools. By decision of the Minister, and after consulting the Pedagogical Institute, other courses may be taught at these schools. School-leaving certificates granted by these pre-primary schools, primary and lower secondary schools are equivalent to certificates from state schools without any verification procedure being required.

Licenses to establish private schools are accorded to Greek citizens as well as to legal entities, provided that they are in compliance with prerequisites stipulated under the law and the relevant Presidential Decree.



Secondary private education falls under the authority and supervision of the Ministry of Education and provides the same type of schooling, including Vocational Lykeia (EPAL) and Vocational Education Training Schools (EPAS).<sup>17</sup>

School-leaving certificates granted by private *lykeia*, technical-vocational *lykeia* and technical- vocational schools are equivalent to those of state schools after the school-leaving examinations written by the pupils in the third grade. These examinations are based on questions set at school level by the teachers in certain general knowledge subjects and for the rest of the general knowledge subjects and all the stream subjects, the questions set by an external nationwide examination committee and are graded by two markers in marking centres at the Prefectoral level.<sup>18</sup>

All schools must have a Parents' Association, a School Council (consisting of the Teachers' Association, the Board of the Parents' Association and a representative of local Government and in secondary school a pupil representative) and a School Committee which is responsible for management. The School Committee consists of a single representative of the municipality or commune, of the Parents' Committee and of the pupils and the Head Teacher.

## *Homeschooling*

The home schooling is not permitted unless there is serious short term or chronic health problems that do not permit the pupil's transportation and attendance at school. As an example, when the attendance for the pupils with Disabilities and Special Educational Needs at mainstream schools of the common educational system or at Self-contained Special Education School Units (SMEAE) is rendered especially difficult due to the type and severity of the disability or disorder the home schooling could be a solution (Eurydice). So, the home schooling can provide to these pupils the learning environment as an alternative to public or private schools outside the home.

## *School choice not limited by family income*

Education is funded mainly by state revenues through the regular budget and public investments budget, and secondly by private expenditure.

Private expenditure on education covers the provision of educational services by private schools operating in parallel with state schools. It also covers the cost of the services of the private tutorial institutes (*frontistiria*) and private teachers employed by the family and students, to supplement the education provided by state and private schools.

Private schools receive no state funding. However, private general secondary schools that belong to non-profit organizations may be supported by special appropriations from the Ministry of Education. Private technical and vocational schools cannot receive grants and are entirely funded by student fees. The lack of public subsidy for nonpublic schools in general has the effect that school choice is a luxury for those who can afford it. There are a few exceptional cases in which public funds are provided to nonpublic schools by decision of the Minister of Education, Lifelong Learning and Religious Affairs.

Pupils in state pre-primary schools and primary schools are given free books and teaching aids and transportation from their home to school and back for the pre-primary school pupils. The family budget share of expenditure on primary school education is limited to supplying writing and drawing materials and an optional share in expenditure to improve education undertaken by the parents' associations in each school.

Finally, from school year 2010-2011, there is a program of positive actions and additional funding to schools in areas where, due to geographical, social and/or economic factors there are education difficulties. This is called educational priority zone (ZEP) and its general purpose is to formulate and implement real classroom alternatives and flexible learning approaches, "good practice" differentiated teaching and training, so that all children have the same opportunities.<sup>19</sup>

### *School distinctiveness protected by law and policy*

Curriculum and instructional objectives are determined by the national Ministry. Nonpublic schools are required to follow the programs and methods of instruction of public schools, including methods of evaluation of academic achievement. Exceptions to allow programmatic variations in particular cases can be granted by the Minister of Education, Lifelong Learning and Religious Affairs.

The education commissions of the regional prefectures (which include a broadly-representative membership) have oversight over organizational – though not curricular – aspects of nonpublic schools, on the same basis as public schools.

The national Ministry oversees compliance with the curriculum guidelines, even the teaching materials used, in nonpublic as in public schools. In the independent sector the most important lack is that of provision for non-profit-making, charitable institutions with freedom to offer variety of choice and of educational programs - a lack which "reflects the conservatism of the government and of the owners and users of the independent schools."<sup>20</sup>



## *Distinctive character*

There is little scope to offer alternative pedagogies in Greek schools, and as a result there are, for example, no Waldorf (Steiner) schools, unlike elsewhere in Europe and America. On the other hand, the secondary schools operated by the Orthodox Church for future priests are allowed to award diplomas which are considered equivalent to the secondary school diplomas of public schools. Moreover, there are Montessori schools which follow the Montessori education that is characterized by an emphasis on independence, freedom within limits, and respect for a child's natural psychological development.

In particular, special programs of instructional intervention (language and learning support) are implemented both in general schools and in primary and secondary schools of Cross-cultural Education. These programs are for immigrant, repatriated and Roma pupils experiencing learning difficulties in the classroom due to their inadequate knowledge of Greek. They are usually carried out when the pupil is newly arrived. Following an assessment of Greek language proficiency based on tests developed by the Pedagogic Institute, the Teachers' Association of every school unit reviews the educational needs of these pupils. During the 2008- 2009 academic year, 425 reception classes and tutorials operated in Primary Education attended by 3,718 immigrant and repatriate pupils, of whom 1205 were integrated into regular classes. Moreover, during the same school year 2,798 Roma children attended Reception Classes at a Primary Education level.<sup>21</sup>

In general, pre-primary schools, there are also Experimental pre-primary schools (Peiramatika), Remedial Education All-Day pre-primary schools with an extended daily program. In addition to general primary Schools, there are also All-Day Primary Schools, Experimental Schools (Peiramatika), Minority Schools, School Units of Special Education and Training, European Education School and Second Chance School.<sup>22</sup> Finally, in addition to general Secondary and Post-Secondary Non-Tertiary Education there are Ecclesiastic Education Schools and Ecclesiastic Institutes of Vocational Training (EIEK), Minority Schools, Music Schools, Schools of Art and Special Education /Schools Special.<sup>23</sup>

The Law 3699 on Special Education,<sup>24</sup> states that all citizens with disabilities and special educational needs have equal opportunities in terms of participation and contribution to society, independent living, financial self-sufficiency and autonomy. In particular, it is provided to pupils with disabilities and special educational needs seek to develop their personality and to render them capable of autonomously participating in family, professional, social and cultural life.

Moreover, it seeks to safeguard fully their rights to education and social inclusion and employment.

### *Decisions about admitting pupils*

In public education the schools do not have the flexibility to choose their pupils. Specifically, the enrolment in public primary education is based solely on the pupil's place of residence. Also, the enrolment in the lower secondary school is based on the pupil's place of residence, with the prerequisite that the student has obtained a school-leaving certificate from primary school. Then the pupils who have successfully completed the lower secondary school and have the school-leaving certificate (*Apolytirio Gymnasiou*) may enroll in a *Geniko* or an *Epaggelmatiko Lykeio* according to their place of residence.<sup>25</sup>

In music schools, the students enroll in the first grade of lower secondary school after selection. Especially, for this selection set up Selection Committee for each music school. The students are assessed through special tests which include rhythm, listening ability, vocal ability, distinguishing nuances, and, optionally, one recognized musical instrument.<sup>26</sup>

In schools of arts, the enrollment of students is only in the first grade of lower secondary and after selection through examinations. Exceptionally and only if there are vacancies, it is possible to enroll students in second grade after examinations.<sup>27</sup>

The introduction of students in Experimental Schools (*Peiramatika Scholeia*) is after exams or testing of skills. Selection of students for pilot kindergartens is by drawing lots.<sup>28</sup>

### *Decisions about staff*

Both public and private pre-primary and primary school teachers must complete a four-year university-level course. Lower and upper secondary education teachers have a university degree in their specialist subject<sup>29</sup> after completing a four-year university level course.

As regards primary and secondary school education, a two-year schedule is prepared by the General Directorate for the Administration of Primary and Secondary Education of the Ministry of Education, Lifelong Learning and Religious Affairs, in order to determine the total number of available positions for teachers in each branch

and specialization. Since 2010 there has been a special training of teachers before teaching in a school. Vacancies are filled by those who succeed in the examinations which are determined by the Supreme Council for Civil Personnel Selection (ASEP). Only if there is a shortage of primary or secondary school teachers or vacancies arising during the school year are substitute teachers or teachers on hourly wages employed.<sup>30</sup>

All pre-primary, primary and secondary-level teachers are civil servants. The salaries of private school teachers are paid by the school proprietor but are at least the same as in State schools.<sup>31</sup> Although the hours of work in private schools are more, the salary is the same as in public schools, according to law 4024.<sup>32</sup>

Teachers of private schools can be dismissed for the same disciplinary reasons as teachers in public schools.<sup>33</sup>

State school teachers are prohibited from supplementing their income by teaching in private schools<sup>34</sup> however the majority of the teachers supplement their income by giving private lessons to students.

Teachers in private schools which belong to legal entities of a non-profit nature and are recognized as equivalent to state schools receive pensions from the State, while persons employed in private schools receive pensions from the Social Security Fund.

In Ecclesiastic Schools teachers are hired by the boards of public secondary education, after requesting preference and the assent of the Church Council Service of Secondary Education. This Council involves two members of teaching staff of higher education or school counselors for secondary education, preferably by theological studies, appointed by the Minister of Education Lifelong Learning and Religious Affairs. Specifically, to cover vacant positions in the Athonite Ecclesiastical Academy (lower secondary and upper- secondary school) and Rizario Ecclesiastic School (general upper- secondary school) additionally requires prior approval of the Holy Community of Mount Athos, or the Rizario Council of Church School, respectively.<sup>35</sup>

The Ministry has authority to select and school staff of public schools, in contrast to private schools, where the administrator selects the teachers after interviews.

## *Accountability for school quality*

Private primary and secondary schools are under the supervision and inspection of the Ministry of Education Lifelong Learning and Religious Affairs. The responsibility for the administrative supervision and monitoring of private and public schools (pre-primary, primary and secondary schools) falls under the heads of the local Primary and Secondary Directorates and Offices accordingly. The responsibility of educational operation falls under the School Advisers.

The school Advisers in Primary and Secondary Education have the responsibility for pedagogical and scientific guidance and support of teachers in a region designated by the Minister. They encourage every effort for scientific research in the field of Education and participate in the evaluation of the educational work of teachers and schools in their area. More specifically the School Advisers assess five issues in a school:

- a) the human resources,
- b) organization and management of school,
- c) climate and relationships in School,
- d) educational procedures and
- e) educational results.

The School Advisers assess the above issues according to some criteria. The criteria are divided into quantitative and qualitative characteristics, including questionnaires and other techniques for obtaining information.<sup>36</sup>

In 2011 the Ministry of Education, Lifelong Learning and Religious Affairs cut out sectors of education where located in Athens<sup>37</sup>: what does this mean? were these closed?

- a) The Pedagogical Institute (PI)<sup>38</sup>
- b) The Centre for Educational Research (KEE)<sup>39</sup>
- c) Teacher Training Agency (O.EP.EK.)<sup>40</sup> and

- d) The Institute of Diaspora Education and Intercultural Education (I.P.O.D.E.)<sup>41</sup>

In February 2012 the Institute for Educational Policy (I.E.P) was established; its main responsibilities are (i) the administrative and educational structures of primary and secondary education, (ii) the educational staff, (iii) the curriculum, and (iv) school book publishing. So, as we can see the Greek educational system still remains centralized.

Based on the Presidential Decree 409/1994, pupil assessment is regarded as an ongoing pedagogical process which makes it possible to follow the pupil's learning progress, to determine its final results and to evaluate the different aspects of the pupil's personality as related to the school's task.<sup>42</sup>

In pre-primary school, assessment is continuous and is based on the observation of behavior and activities of the children, both on an individual and on a group level.<sup>43</sup> At primary school, students are assessed by their teachers throughout the school year. The assessment of pupils is done for all subjects on the basis of 'Descriptive Evaluation', which gives them the chance to provide accurate and detailed information to pupils and their parents with regard to the results of pupils' efforts at school, their skills and preferences as well as their weaknesses in certain areas. The assessment takes -into-account four elements:<sup>44</sup>

- a) Everyday oral examination and the pupil's total participation in the teaching- learning process and school activities
- b) The results of the pupil's performance on the 'assessment criteria' included in the teaching material
- c) The results of tasks and work assigned to the pupil
- d) A creative project in the fifth and sixth Grade

Pupils completing the sixth grade (end of primary school) receive the primary school leaving certificate (*Apolytirio Dimotikou*) which is a prerequisite for admission to lower secondary school (*Gymnasio*). Student assessment is based on:<sup>45</sup>

- a) Everyday oral examination and the pupil's total participation in the teaching-

learning process,

- b) Short written tests
- c) Hour-long compulsory written tests which cover the material of a broader teaching unit
- d) The assignments done by the students at school or at home
- e) The composite creative projects undertaken by the students either alone or in collaboration with classmates
- f) Written review examinations at the end of the year are held right after classes finish, for all subjects except for Physical Education, Music, Household Economics, Technology, Art and School Vocational

(g) Guidance and also Information Technology in the first two *Gymnasio* grades.

Pupils who achieve an overall passing grade, at the end of the third year of lower secondary school receive a school-leaving certificate (*Apolytirio Gymnasiou*), which gives access to upper secondary school.

*Geniko* and *Epaggelmatiko Lykeio* students are assessed by teachers on<sup>46</sup>:

- a) Their participation in daily classroom work and their overall activity at school
- b) Their performance on written tests during the two four-month terms of the school year
- c) Their composite creative projects
- d) Their individual portfolio which is optional for the school

In the end of school year, the pupils write examinations for promotion or graduation. These examinations for pupils in the 1st and 2nd grade are based on questions set by the teachers at the school level. For the pupils in the third grade for certain general knowledge subjects, the examinations are based on questions set at school level by the teachers. For the rest of the subjects, the questions are set by an external



nationwide examination committee and are graded by two markers in marking centres at a prefectural level.

## *Teaching of values*

Article 3, section B, of the Constitution stipulates that the prevailing religion in Greece is the Eastern Orthodox Church of Christ and there is no legal separation between the State and the Church. According to the article 13, part B, the Greek Constitution provides that the freedom of religious belief is inviolable, the enjoyment of individual and civil rights does not depend on one's religious beliefs, all religions are recognized and freely practiced under the protection of the law and the Ministers of all established religions are subject to the same state supervision and are bound to fulfill the same obligations towards the State. Non-Orthodox students are exempted from the course of religious for conscience and specific instruction hours to attend compulsory teaching of different subject teachers to the law.<sup>47</sup>

In addition, according to the article 29, section three of the Constitution,<sup>48</sup> teachers are forbidden to express political beliefs to their students. Under article 27, section three, teachers must respect human rights, philosophical, political and religious beliefs.

In the case of *Valsamis Greece*, the European Court of Human Rights ruled on the punishment with one day's suspension from school of a Jehovah's Witnesses pupil for her failure to attend a school parade during the national commemoration on 28 October.<sup>49</sup> That punishment was imposed in accordance with a circular of 2 January 1990 issued by the Ministry of Education, Lifelong Learning and Religious Affairs. The Court stated that Article 2 of Protocol No. 1 (P1-2) enjoins the State to respect parents' convictions, be they religious or philosophical, throughout the entire State education program.<sup>50</sup> That duty is broad in its extent as it applies not only to the content of education and the manner of its provision but also to the performance of all the "functions" assumed by the State. In the first place, the Court notes that Miss Valsamis was exempted from religious-education lessons and the Orthodox Mass, as had been requested by her parents. The latter also wished to have her exempted from having to parade during the national commemoration on 28 October.

While it is not for the Court to rule on the Greek State's decisions as the setting and planning of the school curriculum regards, it is surprising that pupils can be required on pain of suspension from school, even if only for a day, to parade outside the school precincts on a holiday. Nevertheless, it can discern nothing, either in the purpose of the parade or in the arrangements for it, which could offend the applicants' pacifist convictions to an extent prohibited by the second sentence of Article 2 of Protocol No. 1

(P1-2). It is not for the Court to rule on the expediency of other educational methods which, in the applicants' view, would be better suited to the aim of perpetuating historical memory among the younger generation. It notes, however, that the penalty of suspension, which cannot be regarded as an exclusively educational measure and may have some psychological impact on the pupil on whom it is imposed, is nevertheless of limited duration and does not require the exclusion of the pupil from the school premises.<sup>51</sup>

## *Endnotes*

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<sup>1</sup> OECD, Educational Policy Review, 1995

<sup>2</sup> Jach, 327-332

<sup>3</sup> Eurydice

<sup>4</sup> L. 475/2006

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> [www.statistics.gr](http://www.statistics.gr)

<sup>7</sup> OECD, 2011

<sup>8</sup> [www.arsakeio.gr](http://www.arsakeio.gr)

<sup>9</sup> Eurydice, 2011

<sup>10</sup> L. 1600/1986

<sup>11</sup> FEK 303ŷ/13-03-2003

<sup>12</sup> Presidential Decree 189/2009

<sup>13</sup> F. 3/609/60754/C1-28-5-2010

<sup>14</sup> [www.minedu.gov.gr](http://www.minedu.gov.gr)

<sup>15</sup> Alaxiotis, 2002d, Lawton et al, 2000

<sup>16</sup> L 3966/2011

<sup>17</sup> L. 3475/2006

<sup>18</sup> L. 3475/2006

<sup>19</sup> L. 56/2011 - F.12/20/2045/G1

<sup>20</sup> Mason, 1997

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<sup>21</sup> Eurydice

<sup>22</sup> L 3376/2005 Establishment of European Education School

<sup>23</sup> Eurydice

<sup>24</sup> Law 3699/2008

<sup>25</sup> Eurydice, 2011

<sup>26</sup> FEK 1012/2011 - 60235/C7

<sup>27</sup> FEK 786 / 2004- 45871 /C7/ 8-5-2004

<sup>28</sup> L 3966/2011

<sup>29</sup> Moustakas, 204

<sup>30</sup> L. 3848/2010

<sup>31</sup> Moustakas, 204

<sup>32</sup> L.4024/2011

<sup>33</sup> Moustakas, 205

<sup>34</sup> Article 14 par. 17, L. 1566/85

<sup>35</sup> Article 39, L. 3432/2006

<sup>36</sup> [www.kee.gr](http://www.kee.gr)

<sup>37</sup> L 3966/2011

<sup>38</sup> established by Article 23, L. 1566/1985, S 167

<sup>39</sup> established by Article 2, L. 2327/1995, S 156

<sup>40</sup> established by Article 6, L. 2986/2002, A 24

<sup>41</sup> established by Article 5, L. 2413/1996, S 124

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<sup>42</sup> Eurydice

<sup>43</sup> Eurydice, 2011

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> 104071/C2/4.8.2008

<sup>48</sup> 1975/1986/2011

<sup>49</sup> case numbered 74/1995/580/666

<sup>50</sup> see the *Kjeldsen, Busk Madsen and Pedersen v. Denmark* judgment of 7 December 1976, Series A no. 23

<sup>51</sup> Article 28 para. 3 of Decree no. 104/1979

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